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Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* General Assembly urges immediate cessation of all nuclear testing; urges continuation of moratoriums pending entry into force of comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

* Secretary-General recommends Security Council extend UNFICYP mandate for six months; expresses concern at excessive levels of military forces in Cyprus.

* Secretary-General to report to Security Council on transition from UNPROFOR to Implementation Force; rejects charges United Nations operation in former Yugoslavia was not successful.

* WFP warns it will shut down operations in Democratic People's Republic of Korea if donor countries do not immediately come forward with contributions.

* Administrative and Budgetary Committee recommends waiver of $95 million credits to write off South Africa's apartheid-era dues.

* Economic and Social Council decides to enlarge membership of Population and Development Commission from 27 to 47 members.

* Conference of States Parties to Rights of Child Convention decides to enlarge Committee membership from 10 to 18 experts.

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The General Assembly has strongly deplored all current nuclear testing and strongly urged the immediate cessation of all such testing. It took that action yesterday, by adopting a resolution recommended by its First Committee (Disarmament and International Security). By 85 votes in favour to 18 against, with 43 abstentions, the Assembly commended those nuclear-weapon States observing testing moratoriums and urged them to continue the moratoriums pending the entry into force of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The Assembly adopted a total of 46 resolutions and three decisions recommended by the First Committee. They dealt with such issues as nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, conventional arms, regional disarmament, confidence-building and transparency, an outer space arms race, international security, and disarmament bodies.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the Security Council extend the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for six months until 30 June 1996. In a report dated 10 December, he said UNFICYP's presence on the island remained indispensable to achieving the objectives set out by the Council. Resolution 186 (1964) mandated the Force to use its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of fighting and, as necessary, to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions.

The Secretary-General recalled the Security Council's declaration that the status quo in Cyprus was not an acceptable option. He pointed out that the situation was not static and that delaying an overall settlement was not in the interest of either side. He expressed concern at the excessive levels of military forces and armaments on the island and at the rate at which they were being strengthened. Neither side had heeded the Council's calls for a significant reduction in the number of foreign troops and in defence spending. It had not been possible to make progress even on modest measures aimed at reducing confrontation along the cease-fire lines.

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The Secretary-General is expected to present a report soon on the transition from the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Implementation Force, according to a United Nations spokesman. The report will address the coordination of the United Nations contribution to the implementation of the Bosnian peace accords in the areas of humanitarian relief, refugees, displaced persons, demining, civilian police, human rights, elections and reconstruction.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali rejected allegations that the United Nations operation in the former Yugoslavia had not been a success, the spokesman stressed. The original and primary purpose in deploying peace-keepers in Bosnia and Herzegovina was to protect humanitarian activities. That mission had been largely successful, thanks to the courage and dedication of the civilian workers concerned and thanks to the protection, logistics support and other services provided by UNPROFOR. The United Nations had paid a very high price, with too many of its personnel killed or seriously injured.

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(more)

The World Food Programme (WFP) today warned that it would have to shut down its operations for a half a million people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea if donor countries did not immediately come forward with contributions. The Programme said it would begin phasing out operations on 20 December and would close its Pyongyang office on 15 January if no new contributions were forthcoming.

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Member States would waive their right to receive about $95 million out of $296 million in credits available to them from previous United Nations regular and peace-keeping budgets, if the General Assembly writes off South Africa's unpaid dues for the period between 30 September 1974 and 23 June 1994, according to a letter to the Assembly President approved by the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary). The Committee's action was taken in response to a 4 December letter from the Assembly President, transmitting the plenary's decision that, because of the political importance of the issue, the Committee should provide technical observations on the draft resolution.

Consideration of the agenda item was first requested in a letter from South Africa, whose arrears for 30 September 1974 to 23 June 1994, when the apartheid regime's representatives were excluded from taking part in the Assembly, are about $95 million. Earlier, the representative of South Africa informed the Committee that his country would waive credits of $549,606 and $737,142 that it would be in position to receive from surpluses in the regular and peace-keeping budgets, respectively, for the period between 30 September 1974 and 23 June 1994.

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The Economic and Social Council has decided to enlarge the membership of the Commission on Population and Development from 27 to 47 members. The review of the Commission's membership was among the recommendations of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development.

After protracted negotiations, it was decided that the geographical distribution of seats would be as follows: 12 to African States; 11 to Asian States; 5 to Eastern European States; 9 to Latin American and Caribbean States; and 10 to Western European and Other States. It was also decided that Commission members would be elected by the Council from among members of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and in time for their participation in the Commission's twenty-ninth session, scheduled for February 1996.

Following the decision's adoption, several delegations expressed displeasure with the outcome of the consultations on the matter and stressed that they had joined the consensus with reluctance and in the spirit of compromise.

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The Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child has decided to enlarge the membership of the Committee on the Rights of the Child from 10 to 18 experts. To enter into force, the amendment must be adopted by the General Assembly and approved by two thirds of the States parties.

The Committee examines the progress made by States parties in achieving their obligations under the Convention. The experts serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution and to the principal legal systems. They are elected for a four-year term and are eligible for re-election if renominated.

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